

Newsletter

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- **Moving into the new surgery**
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It is now well into September and as many of you will be aware it is now time for the breeding season to start. In the thoroughbred world there is a perceived premium for foals born as soon as possible after the horse's birthday on August 1. This means on top of our regular work we now have the added demand of scanning large numbers of mares and trying to get them in foal as soon as possible. Also there are already many TB foals born so all the regular and not so regular neonatal problems start to come up. In other breeds where it is not as critical to get early foals will start breeding a bit later, which more easily corresponds with the mares natural breeding cycle.

In a new development for us, we are lucky to have Dr Lindsay McNaught join us for one day per week. Lindsay is a well known and highly experienced equine vet who has practiced in Toowoomba for most of his career before semi-retiring. The aim is for Lindsay to fill in each Thursday while Tias does his regular Gold Coast surgery day. Lindsay will be able to take care of any emergencies that may crop up and also is available for routine consultations.

The new surgery is progressing very well. Only a few finishing touches are now left to complete before we can start



Chaylee helping move some more of the equipment into the new surgery

offering full surgical services. Already we have started doing some selected procedures, for example, tomorrow we will be performing a laparoscopic procedure in a TB mare with blocked oviducts to hopefully restore her fertility. These can be usually done as a standing procedure. We have booked in a number of general anaesthetic surgeries in the main theatre starting from the 7th October.

We have organised one of Tias' ex colleagues, Dr Leah Bradbury to come and help get the anaesthetic machines and monitors commissioned and help us set up appropriate protocols. Leah is a specialist veterinary anaesthetist and has anaesthetised many horses for Tias in the past and having the benefit of her experience and knowledge will help make sure each horse from the very first in the new theatre gets the highest level care and best chance of a good outcome.

Once again we wish to thank all our customers for entrusting the care of their animals with us.

Foot Abscesses

With the excellent rains we have had across the districts we service as always there have been an increase in infections and abscesses in horses feet. These can occur in badly trimmed or cracked feet, which allows moisture and infection to get trapped, but also occur in the best managed and cared for horses. Usually these are relatively easy to treat with drainage of the pus, sometimes antibiotics and tetanus boosters and trimming.

Always there are the cases out there to trick us. An example this month was a lovely school master equestrian horse. 2 days after shoeing and out in the paddock after the first lot of rain he became non weight bearing lame in one forelimb. There was a little response to hoof testers and so the shoe was removed and the foot explored. No suspicious cracks or pocket of pus could be found and so we elected to poultice the foot. We repeated this for a couple of days but still no pus and interestingly the horse did not have quite as pronounced an increase in the pulses in the arteries to his feet as we would have expected.

Although the history and signs closely fitted foot abscesses we felt the horse was not completely typical of this condition so we elected to xray the foot. A severe fracture of P2 bone was found. This particular fracture was a bit unusual as there was not much swelling associated with it, and no crepitation or crunching was felt. Also the horse was such a gentle giant he coped incredibly well with us examining him and let us remove the shoe and walk him over to the concrete for x-raying with minimal fuss.



It is easy to see why this poor horse would not respond if treated for foot abscess. He has a severe fracture of the P2 bone.



Colic

Horses are susceptible to problems of the gastrointestinal tract. There are many and varied causes, some of which relate to the anatomical arrangement of the gut, some due to diet, some due to behaviour, and others due to parasites, drugs, management...the list is enormous.

Most colic cases can be managed relatively simply with pain relief and other medications. More serious cases require fluid support (either by stomach tube or IV), feed withholding, or more invasive procedures like surgery or decompression.

Always diagnosis is important, and this is critical to making good decisions regarding treatment. Unfortunately in the current legal environment many of the diagnostic and treatment options are not available in non Hendra vaccinated horses. Still we try and do the best we can for each case in the circumstances. It remains a huge issue for veterinarians, all of whom want to care for animals the best we can. In many cases we cannot provide the best treatment because a simple vaccine was withheld.

We had an interesting case this week. A TB mare in race training developed colic. The colic was consistent with something blocking the gut partially or with a displacement where the gut moves out of place but is not completely blocked or compromised. The very astute and observant trainers had noticed the mare had been a bit off colour for a few days leading up to the colic episode.

Surgery was not an option for this mare because of her Hendra status but in this case we were able to provide reasonable pain relief and fluid therapy IV to keep her body systems going while the mare dealt with the problem.



Very fortunately for the mare and her connections, she almost miraculously was able to pass a mass in her manure. Close inspection revealed this to be string and rubber from belting in the stable environment. This mare was a notorious chewer of leads, string and anything else in her environment. Most of these cases require surgery to remove the foreign material but this was one lucky case where we were able to get a result without resorting to surgery.

Warwick Equine Veterinarians

STAFF

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Our goal is to provide excellence in clinical service to all our equine patients.

A professional, compassionate and caring approach with good communication, and up to date services.

Excellence in Equine Veterinary Care

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